

I am writing to you today as a consumer and voter who would like to add my voice of support to the pending merger of EchoStar and DIRECTV. The combination of these two satellite providers will provide numerous benefits to consumers like me, including more choices in channels, programming, broadband and new television technologies.

By merging, the combined company will be a much stronger competitor to cable television and can offer more programming choices and, most importantly, all local TV channels in every market in the U.S. By providing local TV channels everywhere, this merger will make satellite television a strong alternative to cable in our community. Throughout the country, people will now be able to turn to satellite TV to access their local news, weather and community information, in addition to a comprehensive package of national video programming. But just as exciting, the merger will bring the availability of affordable high-speed Internet service by satellite to over 40 million Americans who don't have high-speed Internet access. These tremendous benefits to consumers won't happen without the merger. Satellite-delivered Internet service will bring an affordable and competitive alternative to cable modems and DSL to consumers in big cities, small towns and rural areas alike. This will give me a competitive choice for Internet access and will be especially advantageous to rural communities where cable modems and DSL are not likely to be available anytime in the near future.

The local cable television service is a joke and the county government is locked in to a 10 year contract with them. Of course, the county adds a ton of junk fees on to the service, such as franchise fee and regulatory fee.

I wish sometime I could purchase one thing devoid of these charges, but that is another letter. Anyway, the cable company claims it IS NOT a utility. Wrong, they are regulated, it comes in to my house via a wire on a pole - looks like a duck, quacks like a duck, etc. You get the message. Cable has long lobbied that the consumer would be the loser with such a merger. Wrong, the consumer would be a winner, cable would be a loser. In the spirit of the decade, merger mania should proceed in this case as it has with oil companies, computer companies, TV stations, and nearly everything else.

In the interest of improving our access to competitive television and Internet service, I urge you to lend your support to this merger.